

# Hebrews 13:1-2 Commentary

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CONSIDER JESUS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST

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[Swindoll's Chart](#), [Interesting Pictorial Chart of Hebrews](#), [Another Chart](#)

<b>The Epistle to the Hebrews</b>				
<b>INSTRUCTION Hebrews 1-10:18</b>			<b>EXHORTATION Hebrews 10:19-13:25</b>	
Superior Person of Christ Hebrews 1:1-4:13	Superior Priest in Christ Hebrews 4:14-10:18			Superior Life In Christ Hebrews 10:19-13:25
BETTER THAN PERSON Hebrews 1:1-4:13	BETTER PRIESTHOOD Heb 4:14-7:28	BETTER COVENANT Heb 8:1-13	BETTER SACRIFICE Heb 9:1-10:18	BETTER LIFE
MAJESTY OF CHRIST	MINISTRY OF CHRIST			MINISTERS FOR CHRIST
DOCTRINE			DUTY	

DATE WRITTEN:

ca. 64-68AD

See [ESV Study Bible "Introduction to Hebrews"](#)  
(See also [MacArthur's Introduction to Hebrews](#))

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Hebrews 13:1 **Let love of the brethren continue.** ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [E philadelphia meneto. \(3SPAM\)](#)

**Amplified:** LET LOVE for your fellow believers continue and be a fixed practice with you [never let it fail].  
([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

**NIV:** Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. ([NIV - IBS](#))

**NLT:** Continue to love each other with true Christian love. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** Never let your brotherly love fail ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** Let the brotherly affection continue.

**Young's Literal:** Let brotherly love remain;

**LET LOVE OF THE BRETHREN CONTINUE: e philadelphia meneto (3SPAM):**

- Heb 6:10,11 10:24 Jn 13:34,35 15:17 Acts 2:1,44, 45, 46 4:32 Ro 12:9,10 Gal 5:6,13,22 Eph 4:3 5:2 Php 2:1, 2, 3 1Th 4:9,10 2Th 1:3 1Pe 1:22 1Pe 2:17 3:8 4:8 2Pe 1:7 1Jn 2:9,10 3:10-18,23 4:7, 8, 9, 10, 11,20,21 1Jn 5:1 2Jn 1:5,6 Rev 2:4
- [Hebrews 13 Resources](#)
- [Hebrews 13:1-3 Let Love Continue](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 13:1-4 Love, Sex, and Marriage](#) - John MacArthur
- [Hebrews 13 Love, Sex and Marriage - Study Guide - Click Drop down for individual study](#)- John MacArthur

**Puritan David Dickson** wrote the following comment in 1632 - Let brotherly love continue. From the first precept, learn (1) That the first fruit of faith which God requireth is love and constant love among His children. (2) That our mutual love, must be sincere and kindle as if it were grounded on bands of nature. ([David Dickson - Commentary on Hebrews 1632 - downloads 11MB Pdf](#))

The brief exhortation (Heb 13:22) to the Hebrews follows the pattern of most NT epistles (see table above). **Doctrine** is followed by a call to **duty**, what to **believe** is followed by how to **behave**, **theology** should affect **transform** one's **ethics** (**Related resource: Application**).

**Dods** labels Hebrews 13:1-6 - Exhortations to social manifestations of their Christianity ([Hebrews 13 Commentary - The Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

## A CONFESSION

As I was compiling these notes it struck me that the most difficult **brethren** to love often are those who are closest to us - Husbands and wives, parents and children, in laws (who we often treat like "outlaws"! ). Beloved, I am convicted that I need to begin in my "Jerusalem" (Acts 1:8-note) and empowered by the Holy Spirit, I am to bear "witness" of the supernatural power of a new heart (2Co 5:17-note) to those closest to me by continually letting love of the brethren continue! Too often I think of the brethren who are far removed from my sphere of influence and find it easier to show them love. God is saying to me (and perhaps to you), **let love of the brethren continue** right where I have you situated, right in the middle of the circumstances I have providentially ordained. That's where I (we) need to obey this command empowered by the Spirit of grace and motivated by a desire (Php 2:13NLT-note) and ambition to be pleasing to Him (2Co 5:9-note), knowing that we shall all stand before the **Judgment Seat (bema)** of Christ and be recompensed for the deeds we have done in the our body, including how we demonstrated love to the brethren. (2Co 5:10-note)

Husbands (I'm one for some 46 years) do you hear God's call to show love to your wives? (Eph 5:25-note- Don't try to accomplish this in your own/old strength! You can't! But you can filled with His Spirit! Eph 5:18-note) Wives do you hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches? Children, are you listening? May God be greatly glorified by Spirit filled saints who seek to supernaturally love the brethren for the sake of the One Who loved us supremely in Christ (1Jn 3:16, Ro 5:8-note). Amen.

The question for all of us who have already expressed some degree of brotherly love (you will if you are truly born again - see below) - As you have studied the book of Hebrews or the Bible in general, has your love for your brothers and sisters increased or decreased? Remember that "continue" is not a static but a dynamic verb implying progress, advancement, growth, and increase. Bible study was never meant to make us smarter sinners, but to make us more like the Savior. So let me ask it again - Is your love for the brethren growing stronger? Are you as convicted as I am beloved?

***Blest be the tie that binds  
Our hearts in Christian love;  
The fellowship of kindred minds  
Is like to that above.***

***We share our mutual woes,  
Our mutual burdens bear,  
And often for each other flows  
The sympathizing tear.***

**A W Pink** sees a link between chapter 12 and 13 (remember chapter breaks were not inspired and occasionally are poorly placed)

...

So far from there being a radical break between Heb. 12 and 13 the closing verses of the former and the opening ones of the latter are closely linked together. There the apostle had mentioned the principal duties which believers are to perform **Godwards**, namely, to "hear" (Heb 12:25-note) and to "serve Him acceptably" (Heb 12:28); here, he tabulates those duties which are to be performed **manwards**. He begins with what is really the sum and substance of all the rest, brotherly love: first, the loving of God with all our heart, and then our neighbor as ourselves...

Matthew. Henry well pointed out, "the spirit of Christianity is a spirit of love." The fruit of the Spirit is love (Gal. 5:22-note). Faith works by love (Gal. 5:6). "Everyone that loves Him that begat loves him also that is begotten of Him" (1Jn 5:1). Love to the brethren is both the first indication and fruit of the Christian life (Acts 16:33) and the final aim and result of Divine grace (2Pe 1:7-note). ([Hebrews 13:1 Brotherly Love](#))

The first 10 chapters of Hebrews are almost pure doctrine and directed primarily to Jewish readers who had heard the Good News of the Messiah but who were in need of affirmation that the Person and Priesthood of Christ and His the New Covenant in His blood was superior to the angels, to Moses, to the priesthood of Aaron, to the Old Covenant and to the Levitical sacrificial system. The ultimate aim of the writer was to speak these truths about Christ so that their faith would be firmly anchored and unshakeable. And that is why he encourages them with the examples from their own history (Heb 11:1, 2ff-note), so that they might run the race of faith with endurance (Heb 12:1-note, Heb 12:2-note), pursuing peace and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord (Heb 12:14-note). Now in Hebrews 13 the writer is emphasizing that true faith demands true living.

And so it is not surprising that this chapter ends with a number of exhortations related to a believer's conduct...

- Brotherly love, Hebrews 13:1-note
- Hospitality, Hebrews 13:2-note
- Sympathy with those in bonds, Hebrews 13:3-note
- Fidelity in the marriage relation, Hebrews 13:4-note
- Contentment, Hebrews 13:5, 6-note
- Submission to those in authority, Hebrews 13:7, 8-note
- Stability in the doctrines of religion, Hebrews 13:9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 15-note
- Benevolence, Hebrews 13:16-note
- Obedience to those entrusted with office, Hebrews 13:17-note
- Special prayer for him who wrote this epistle, Hebrews 13:18, 19-note

**M R De Haan** has an interesting introduction to chapter 13 writing that "AT the close of a school semester, or upon completion of a prescribed course of study it is customary for the teachers to subject the students to a test or examination to determine how much the pupil has absorbed and retained of that which was taught in the daily class sessions. The results of these finals have an

important bearing on the final grade, and may determine whether the individual will pass or not. No matter how brilliant the student may have been in his daily assignments, if he “flunks” his final, it will pull his average down, for the term’s marks are determined largely on the final examination. Some students are like a sieve, knowledge just runs through; others are reservoirs for the storing up of knowledge as a source of refreshing and power for the future. We can apply this method to the study of the Bible. As you read the epistles, you will notice that as a rule several chapters are devoted to the doctrinal teaching of the Word, and then the last chapter or chapters are devoted to a practical application of these truths, to be translated into action. Such is the case in the Book of Hebrews... The test is in the form of a quiz program, where the student is presented with a set of suggested questions and permitted to grade himself. The examination opens with a statement. Let brotherly love continue (Heb. 13:1). (De Haan, M. R. Studies in Hebrews. Kregel Publications)

**Let... continue** (3306)(**meno**) means to remain, to abide, to last, to endure, to survive, to live, not to perish.

**Spurgeon** - The word “continue” implies that the “brotherly love” exists, there are many things which might put an end to it, so see to it that, as far as you are concerned, it continues. Under all provocations, and under all disappointments, “let brotherly love continue.”...It is supposed to be there already; let it continue, not only love of a common kind, such as we are to have to all men, but that special “brotherly love” which Christians bear to one another as members of one family. “Let brotherly love continue.”

**Henry Alford** - Let it then remain, not die out. And it is put first, as being the first of the fruits of faith. The exhortations in Heb 3:12, 13.; Heb 10:24, 25.; Heb 12:12, 13, 14, point the same way). ([Hebrews 13 The New Testament for English Readers](#))

The writer issues this exhortation as a **present imperative**, a command signifying that this was to be their supernaturally enabled, Spirit filled, grace strengthened habitual practice! In addition he uses the **middle voice** which signifies the subject initiates the action and participates in the carrying out of the action or the results of the action. This voice is reflexive and gives the sense “you yourself let it continue.” Remember that God’s commands always include His enablement, specifically the power of the Holy Spirit to prompt this desire in us and then to enable us to obey in love.

Two verses prior in Heb 12:28-note the phrase “**have gratitude**” is more literally translated as “**continually having grace**”. It is when we are empowered by grace that we can offer to God an acceptable service in reverence and awe. Now as those in the New Covenant of grace, these readers can demonstrate love to the brethren because this grace gives them a new motivation and power (cp Ezekiel 36:26, 27-note, Php 2:12-note, Php 2:13-note). Don’t try to “love the brethren” in your own power (your old natural power) for you can’t do it, but God can and He promised to do it in us and through us!

The use of the verb **continue** indicates that such love already exists as recorded earlier “For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and **the love which you have shown toward His name** in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints. (Heb 6:10-note)

**Comment:** Note that this love to the saints was “**toward His Name**” and I would add therefore was for His fame! His glory and fame are always to be the aim of our good works initiated and energized by His Spirit.

The use of the verb **meno** suggests that the bond had been in danger of being severed. (See [comment below](#) by Hughes)

**W E Vine** writes that **brotherly love** “is a law of the kingdom just mentioned (Heb 12:28). It is an evidence of heavenly citizenship. The exhortation suggests that such love had existed and needed maintaining.

Love is the binding power which holds the body of the Christian church together. -Stephen Olford

No man can love a saint, as a saint, but a saint. - Richard Sibbes

The measure of our love for others can largely be determined by the frequency and earnestness of our prayers for them. - A. W. Pink

**A W Pink** adds that “**let... continue**” includes the idea of enduring in the face of difficulties and temptations. That which is enjoined is perseverance in a pure and unselfish affection toward fellow-Christians. Brotherly love is a tender plant which requires much attention: if it be not watched and watered, it quickly wilts. It is an exotic, for it is not a native of the soil of fallen human nature —“hateful and hating one another” (Titus 3:3) is a solemn description of what we were in our unregenerate state. Yes, brotherly love is a very tender plant and quickly affected by the cold air of unkindness, easily nipped by the frost of harsh words. If it is to thrive, it must needs be carefully protected and diligently cultivated... Yes, a most needful exhortation is this: not only because hatred so largely sways the world, but also because of the state of Christendom. **Here is a searching question which each of us should honestly face: Is my love for the brethren keeping pace with my growing (intellectual) knowledge of the Truth?** “Let brotherly love continue.” What a solemn word is this! Is the reader startled by that adjective?—a needful and humbling one, but scarcely a “solemn.” Ah, have we forgotten the context? Look at the verse which immediately precedes, and remember that when this epistle was first written there were no chapter-breaks: Heb 12:29 and Heb 13:1 read consecutively, without any hiatus—**our God is a**

**consuming fire: let brotherly love continue!** The fact these two verses are placed in immediate juxtaposition strikes a most solemn note.

**Wuest** - Expositor's labels these exhortations (Heb 1–3) as exhortations to social manifestations of the Christianity of the recipients of this letter. The same authority says: "In the general decay of their faith, tendencies to disown Christian fellowship had become apparent (Heb 10:24, 25)." ([Hebrews - Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament](#))

**Love of the brethren** (5360) (**philadelphia** from **philos** = beloved, dear, friendly + **adelphós** = brother, from the same womb) means "fraternal love", brotherly love (kindness), love of the brethren. Brotherly love normally referred to the love members of a family held for each other (this was the way it was used in secular Greek) and would not normally be used to describe the love between members of different families.

In secular Greek use **philadelphia** described love of those who were actually related by blood, but here in Hebrews (and elsewhere in the NT) **philadelphia** describes the kinship among those who are in children of God, members of the same family (John 1:12, 13) "**all from one Father**" (Heb 2:11-note, Mt 23:8, 9, Compare the phrase "*God our Father*" in Ro 1:7 1Cor 1:3 2Cor 1:2 Gal 1:3 Eph 1:2 Php 1:2 Col 1:2 2Th 1:1 2Th 2:16 Philemon 1:3). As an aside unregenerate Jews never referred to God as their Father (cp Jn 8:39). And so in the NT **philadelphia** is describes the love that believers possess for one to another, for even though they were members of different natural families, they are united in Christ and were recipients of family love originating from the Father Who had bestowed His great love on His spiritual children (1Jn 3:1-note).

**Philadelphia** describes a love which calls for an affection for one another like that one expressed between natural family members. **Wuest** adds that the related verb **phileo** "speaks of human affection, fondness, a non-ethical, though perfectly legitimate, form of love."

This new radical relationship between believers is hinted at in the the other root word of philadelphia, **adelphós**, which describes one from the same womb. As **Kenneth Wuest** explains, the fact that all believers have their "new birth" from "the same womb" (Jn 3:3), is a truth which forms "the basis of their Christian fondness and affection for each other, the source of their Christian fellowship."

And so, in the New Covenant of grace believing Greeks and Jews, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarians, Scythians, slaves and freemen, men and women are now all one in their Lord (cp Gal 3:28, Col 3:11-note, Eph 4:1, 2, 3-note). Such a diverse cultural community would have continual need for emphasis on continuing to **love the brethren**.

It should also be noted that **love of the brethren** is not just a passive disposition of fondness but manifests itself in overt acts of kindness toward the brethren, acts which are described in subsequent passages (showing hospitality Heb 13:2, remembering those in prison Heb 13:3, etc).

**Phillip Hughes** writes that "our author has provided the key to the correct theological understanding of this brotherly relationship in an important passage (Heb 2:11ff.), where it becomes plain that the brotherhood enjoyed among Christians derives from Christ himself, first of all by his incarnation through which he became one with us as a fellow human being, and second by our becoming one with him through our experience of the redemption which he has accomplished for us. Christian brotherhood, therefore, is essentially brotherhood in Christ; for as he is the only Son (Heb 1:2, 5ff., etc.) so, as has already been stressed, it is through union with him that we participate in the grace of his sonship, and in him are accepted as the sons of God and, as sons, brothers and fellow heirs with him who is the heir of all things (Heb 1:2; Ro 8:14-17; Eph 1:5-7, 11-14; Jn 1:13). If our brotherhood derives from Christ, so also does our love as brothers. His infinite love for us is the source and stimulus of our love for each other. Hence the precept given by the Master in the upper room: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 13:34; cf. 15:12, 17; 2Jn 5; 1Jn 3:11, 14, 16-18; 4:7-12). ([A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews- Philip Edgcumbe Hughes](#))

**Guzik** - In the ancient Greek language the New Testament was written in, there were four words at hand that we might translate love. Eros was one word for love. It described, as we might guess from the word itself, erotic love. It refers to sexual love. Storge was a second word for love. It refers to family love, the kind of love there is between a parent and child, or between family members in general. Agape is another word for love. It is the most powerful word for love in the New Testament, and is often used to describe God's love towards us. It is a love that loves without changing. It is a self-giving love that gives without demanding or expecting repayment. It is love so great that it can be given to the unlovable or unappealing. It is love that loves even when it is rejected. Agape love gives and loves because it wants to; it does not demand or expect repayment from the love given - it gives because it loves, it does not love in order to receive. Agape love isn't about feelings, it is about decisions. But the word for love used in Hebrews 13:1 is philadelphia, coming from the root philia. This ancient Greek word speaks of a brotherly friendship and affection. It is the love of deep friendship and partnership. There should always be plenty of this kind of love among Christians, and it should continue.

**J N Darby** discusses the relationship of **brotherly love** to **agape love** noting that the latter "in its root, is the nature of God Himself,

the source and perfection of every other quality that adorns Christian life. The distinction between **agape love** and **brotherly love** is of deep importance; the former is indeed the source whence the latter flows; but as this brotherly love exists in mortal men, it may be mingled in its exercise with sentiments that are merely human, with individual affection, with the effect of personal attractions, or that of habit, of suitability in natural character. Nothing is sweeter than **brotherly affections**; their maintenance is of the highest importance in the assembly; but they may degenerate, as they may grow cool; and if **agape love**, if God, does not hold the chief place, they may displace Him—set Him aside—shut Him out. Divine **agape love**, which is the very nature of God, directs, rules, and gives character to **brotherly love**; otherwise it is that which pleases **us**—that is, our own heart—that governs **us**. If divine **agape love** governs me, I love all my brethren; I love them because they belong to Christ; there is no partiality. I shall have greater enjoyment in a spiritual brother; but I shall occupy myself about my weak brother with a love that rises above his weakness and has tender consideration for it. I shall concern myself with my brother's sin, from love to God, in order to restore my brother, rebuking him, if needful; nor, if divine love be in exercise, can brotherly love, or its name, be associated with disobedience. In a word, God will have His place in all my relationships. To exact brotherly love in such a manner as to shut out the requirements of that which God is, and of His claims upon us, is to shut out God in the most plausible way, in order to gratify our own hearts. Divine **agape love** then, which acts according to the nature, character, and will of God, is that which ought to direct and characterize our whole Christian walk, and have authority over every movement of our hearts. Without this, all that **brotherly love** can do is to substitute man for God. Divine love is the bond of perfectness, for it is God, who is love, working in us and making Himself the governing object of all that passes in the heart.

**S Lewis Johnson** - You've heard people say, "I love all the saints; but some I love better at a distance." Well, that's not Christian love. "I love them all, but there are some I don't like." Well, that's not Christian love either. Those may be facts about our human experience, but they're not Christian expressions. It certainly is not the ideal. "**Let brotherly love continue.**" In fact, we all know that the only way in which we can love brethren is by the divine love that is in our hearts by virtue of the work of the Holy Spirit. And so we all need to call upon the Holy Spirit within to enable us to love our Christian brethren and sisters. ([Hebrews](#))

**John** emphasizes the importance of **love of the brethren** warning his readers that "If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love (**agapao** = expression of divine love) his brother whom he has seen, cannot love (**agapao**) God **whom** he has not seen. (1Jn 4:20)

**Peter** echoes John's point writing "Since you have in obedience (faith that obeys) to the truth purified your souls for (faith that saves leads to brotherly love) a sincere **love of the brethren (philadelphia)**, **fervently love one another from the heart** for (Peter explains why we should and how we can love one another declaring that) you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God. (1Pe 1:22,23-note)

In a word, the **love of the brethren** proves that one is truly born again. John reiterates this truth writing...

We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. (1Jn 3:14)

**Henry Morris comments:** Here is another test for knowing whether we are truly saved and have "passed from death unto life" (Jn 5:24; 1Jn 2:3,5; 3:24; 5:2,13). John gives three characteristics of true love for our brethren: doing righteousness (1John 3:10); willingness to die for them (1Jn 3:16); willingness to share our possessions with them" (1Jn 3:17).

**A W Pink** - you may, dear reader, be afraid to affirm that you love God, but do you not love His people? If you do, you must have been born again, and have in you the same spiritual nature which is in them. But do I love them? Well, do you relish their company, admire what you see of Christ in them, wish them well, pray for them, and seek their good? If so, you certainly love them. But not only is the exercise of Christian love a testimony unto the world of our Christian discipleship, and a sure evidence of our own regeneration, but it is also that which delights God Himself. Of course it does! It is the product of His own grace: the immediate fruit of His Spirit. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Ps 133:1) is what the Lord Himself declares.

**Olford** - No one can be a true Christian without a love for his brethren; and this, in itself, should be the ultimate motivation for giving hospitality to all the people of God. Martin Luther once said that we need to see ourselves as water fountains: the love of God first flowing into us and then out of us to others.

**Gromacki** - At conversion all believers are immediately implanted with a genuine love for God and for His children (1Th 4:9note; 1Jn 3:14; 4:19). That love, however, needs to be increased by the effort of each believer (Heb 10:24-note; 1Th 4:9; 2Pe 1:7-note). The readers possessed true brotherly love, a sign of their regeneration. The appeal is for its daily maintenance and proper manifestation (Continue = present active imperative). ([Stand Bold in Grace An Exposition of Hebrews](#))

As Darby and Johnson allude to in the previous discussion, the way one **loves the brethren** now is not by our *natural* powers but is by the *supernatural* enablement of and dependence upon the Holy Spirit. Paul taught that "the (**agape**) love of God has been poured

out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (Ro 5:5-note) and "the fruit of the Spirit is (**agape**) love." (Gal 5:22-note)

In view of the fact that believers now have a supernatural source of power to love unconditionally and sacrificially, **Paul** exhorts the saints in Rome to...

Be devoted (**philostorgos** from **philos** = beloved, dear + **storge** = family love, love of parents and children) to one another in **brotherly love (philadelphia)**; give preference to one another in honor (Ro 12:10-note)

**Paul** commends the saints in Thessalonica for their love...

Now as to the **love of the brethren (philadelphia)**, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for (Paul now explains how philadelphia love is possible) you yourselves are taught by God to **love (agapao** in the present tense = habitually, as your new way of life) one another (1Thes 4:9-note) (Related Resource: Study the "**one anothers**" - most positive, some negative)

Now that saints have access to God's precious and magnificent promises (2Pe 1:4-note) and are called to be partakers of His divine nature (2Pe 1:4), we are to be diligent to grow in Christlikeness, in our faith, increasing in a number of attributes including "**brotherly kindness (philadelphia)**" (2Pet 1:5-note, 2Pe 1:7-note)

**Jesus** says **brotherly love** is the badge of a believer declaring "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. (Jn 13:35).

**Brotherly love** is (should be) the natural outflow of a follower of Christ. True brotherly love cannot be self generated (as least in the sense that it brings glory to God, for apart from His initiating and enabling the work, it is our work, the work of a "branch" rather than of the Vine, Christ Jesus, Jn 15:5). To be sure, His work through us can be "faked" as well as stifled. Our goal should be to nurture this grace of letting love flow by yielding to the Spirit when He gives us opportunities to work it out in fear and trembling. This explanation also helps understand why believers are not told to **make it happen** but to **let it continue**. It's like a faucet that is turned on - we are not the source of the water coming through the conduit and the spigot but we can cut off the flow or we can choose to allow it to continue to flow. So let love "flow" through you to the brethren. Because of our having been transferred from darkness to light and into a new kingdom when we are saved, we are naturally (really supernaturally) drawn toward fellowship with other believers who are also in the kingdom of light. And remember, "be nice" to your brethren, because we are going to spend a long, long time with them in eternity future! The deepest fellowship is not based on blood but on whether you are "under the blood of Jesus" and have a future and a hope to share.

Remember that many of the readers of this letter had most likely been rejected by their friends and families for having made a commitment to Jesus Christ as their Savior (cp Jesus' clear warning of the cost of discipleship, the cost of following Him - Mt 10:21, 22, 34, 35, 36, Mk 13:12, Lk 12:51, 52, 53, 21:16). But the deepest fellowship is not based on race or family ties (blood is not really "thicker than water" in the spiritual realm) but is based on the life we share in Christ.

**Spurgeon** - The word "**continue**" implies that "brotherly love" exists. There are many things that might put an end to it; so see to it that, as far as you are concerned, it continues. Under all provocations, and under all disappointments, "brotherly love must continue." Let each esteem others better than himself; let each seek his brother's good to edification. Let us by no means be divided in heart, for schisms grieve the Holy Spirit, destroy our comfort, weaken our graces, afford occasion for naysayers, and bring a thousand ills upon us. Whereas in these evil days the Church is so much divided into denominations and sections, follow peace with all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Hold what you believe with firmness, for you are not to trifle with God's truth; but wherever you see anything of Christ, confess relationship there, and act as a brother toward your brother in Christ.

**Brotherly love** an evidence of one's regeneration "The obvious inquiry is: Do you love the people of God because they are the people of God? Because you discover in them the amiableness of that religion which is altogether lovely? Do you love them, not merely because they love you or have bestowed favors upon you; not because they are of your party, but because they bear the image of your heavenly Father? Do you love them for their love of God, their self-denial, their heavenliness, their usefulness in the world, their reproachless example, their faithfulness and love of duty? Do you love them when they reprove you, and when their example condemns you? And do you love them in proportion to the measure of these excellencies which they possess? Do you feel an interest in them and for them? Can you bear and forbear with them? Can you forget their infirmities, or do you rejoice to magnify them? Can you cast the mantle of charity over their sins and pray for them, and watch over them, and pity, and love them still? And can you feel thus and act thus toward the poorest and most despised of the flock and that because he is a Christian? If so, here is your encouragement "He that loves is born of God" (1Jn 4:7). (**[BROTHERLY LOVE Another evidence is love to the brethren](#)**)

**Barclay**- The very circumstances of the early Church sometimes threatened brotherly love. The very fact that they took their religion as seriously as they did was in one sense a danger. In a Church which is threatened from the outside and desperately in earnest in the inside, there are always two dangers. First, there is the danger of heresy-hunting. The very desire to keep the faith pure tends to

make men eager to track down and eliminate the heretic and the man whose faith has gone astray. Second, there is the danger of stern and unsympathetic treatment of the man whose nerve and faith have failed. The very necessity of unswerving loyalty in the midst of a heathen and a hostile world tends to add rigorousness to the treatment of the man who in some crisis had not the courage to stand for his faith. It is a great thing to keep the faith clean; but when the desire to do so makes us censorious, harsh and unsympathetic, brotherly love is destroyed and we are left with a situation which may be worse than the one we tried to avoid. Somehow or other we have to combine two things--an earnestness in the faith and a kindness to the man who has strayed from it. ([Hebrews 13 Commentary - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

See multiple articles in Puritan writings that mention "**brotherly love**" [sitetwww.gracegems.org brotherly love - Google Search](#)

**Kent Hughes** has an interesting comment on the command noting that...

The structure of the command here to "**Keep on loving each other as brothers**" (literally, "Let the brotherly love remain") suggests that the brotherly and sisterly bonds in the little church were dangerously frayed among some of the members. This was not the way they had begun because initially the fresh experience of salvation in Christ had brought with it the discovery of a shared paternity, the joyous sense of being brothers and sisters with the same Father, and the experience of philadelphia—the word used here, meaning "brotherly love."

At first, this love had come to those new believers as naturally as one's first steps, very much like Paul's allusion to the similar experience of the Thessalonians: "Now about brotherly love [philadelphia] we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other" (1Th 4:9). For these new Christians, loving other believers was as easy as "falling off a log." They could not wait to get to church where they could drink in the fellowship of the godly. The fellowship of their new brothers and sisters was delectably mysterious to them, and they rejoiced in plumbing the depth of each other's souls... But it had been waning in the little house-church with the years of stress and uncertainty. Some of the brethren had grown weary of each other. And a few actually seemed to exchange mutual hatred. What to do? The answer given here is utterly volitional—they were to will to practice brotherly love!

Inwardly, this requires that we will to consider the stupendous implications of our shared generation—that we truly are "brothers" and sisters (the terms are not merely sentimental but are objective fact)—that though we are millions, we share only one Father—that we will still be brothers and sisters when the sun turns to ice—that God is pleased when brothers and sisters dwell together in unity (cf. Psalm 133 and John 17). Outwardly, we must will to say and do only those things that will enhance our philadelphia. To paraphrase Will Rogers, we must so order our lips that we would not be afraid to sell the family parrot to the pastor—or to any other Christian friend. ([Hughes, R. K. Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul. Volume 1. Crossway; Volume 2](#))

**Apology of Aristides The Philosopher** (Written circa 125AD when Hadrian visited Athens - the translation below is from the Syriac versio) recorded the following observations concerning the **first and second century followers of Christ**..

But the Christians, O King, while they went about and made search, have found the truth; and as we learned from their writings, they have come nearer to truth and genuine knowledge than the rest of the nations. For they know and trust in God, the Creator of heaven and of earth, in whom and from whom are all things, to whom there is no other god as companion, from whom they received commandments which they engraved upon their minds and observe in hope and expectation of the world which is to come. Wherefore they do not commit adultery nor fornication, nor bear false witness, nor embezzle what is held in pledge, nor covet what is not theirs. They honour father and mother, and show kindness to those near to them; and whenever they are judges, they judge uprightly. They do not worship idols (made) in the image of man; and whatsoever they would not that others should do unto them, they do not to others; and of the food which is consecrated to idols they do not eat, for they are pure. And their oppressors they appease (lit: comfort) and make them their friends; they do good to their enemies; and their women, O King, are pure as virgins, and their daughters are modest; and their men keep themselves from every unlawful union and from all uncleanness, in the hope of a recompense to come in the other world. Further, if one or other of them have bondmen and bondwomen or children, through love towards them they persuade them to become Christians, and when they have done so, they call them brethren without distinction. They do not worship strange gods, and they go their way in all modesty and cheerfulness. Falsehood is not found among them; and they love one another, and from widows they do not turn away their esteem; and they deliver the orphan from him who treats him harshly. And he, who has, gives to him who has not, without boasting. And when they see a stranger, they take him in to their homes and rejoice over him as a very brother; for they do not call them brethren after the flesh, but brethren after the spirit and in God. And whenever one of their poor passes from the world, each one of them according to his ability gives heed to him and carefully sees to his burial. And if they hear that one of their number is



imprisoned or afflicted on account of the name of their Messiah, all of them anxiously minister to his necessity, and if it is possible to redeem him they set him free. And if there is among them any that is poor and needy, and if they have no spare food, they fast two or three days in order to supply to the needy their lack of food. They observe the precepts of their Messiah with much care, living justly and soberly as the Lord their God commanded them. Every morning and every hour they give thanks and praise to God for His loving-kindnesses toward them; and for their food and their drink they offer thanksgiving to Him. And if any righteous man among them passes from the world, they rejoice and offer thanks to God; and they escort his body as if he were setting out from one place to another near. And when a child has been born to one of them, they give thanks to God; and if moreover it happen to die in childhood, they give thanks to God the more, as for one who has passed through the world without sins. And further if they see that any one of them dies in his ungodliness or in his sins, for him they grieve bitterly, and sorrow as for one who goes to meet his doom. **(Read the rest of the interesting description of the first century Christians [see Roman Numeral XVI] who gave quite a testimony to the supernatural Spirit filled, Christ life and set a high and holy example for modern believers to imitate - [The Apology of Aristides the Philosopher](#))**

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**Brotherly love among the early Christians:** — A striking instance of the brotherly love of the early Christians transpired in the great plague that raged round Alexandria, during the reign of Gallienus. At the first appearance of the symptoms, the heathen drove the infected man from their sight; they tore themselves from their dearest connections; they threw their friends half-dead into the streets, and left their dead unburied. But, in contrast with this cruel selfishness, “the Christians, in the abundance of their brotherly love,” as their Bishop Dionysius says, “did not spare themselves, but mutually attending each other, they would visit the sick without fear, and ministering to each other for the sake of Christ, cheerfully gave up their lives with them. Many died after their care had restored others to health. Many, who took the bodies of their Christian brethren into their hands and bosoms, and closed their eyes, and buried them with every mark of attention, soon followed them in death.”

**Illustration** - Frightened by the clamor of thunder in the night, a little child cried out. Holding her securely in his arms, her father explained that she needn't fear. God would take care of her because He loved her greatly. “I know God will take care of me and loves me,” she replied. “But right now, Daddy, I want someone with skin on to love me.” We are to be God's love, with skin on, ministering to others.

## **PRESERVATION OF BROTHERLY LOVE**

**John Owen** writes on the preservation of brotherly love:

Brotherly love is very apt to be impaired if we do not endeavor continually to preserve it. It is a part of the wisdom of faith to consider aright the occasions of the decay of mutual love, and the means of its preservation. Without this we cannot comply with this caution and injunction in a due manner.

**I. The CAUSES OF THE DECAY OF THIS LOVE,** whence it doth not continue as it ought, are —

1. Self-love.
2. Love of this present world.
3. Abounding of lusts in the hearts of men.
4. Ignorance of the true nature, both of the grace and the exercise of it, in its proper duties.
5. Principally, the loss of a concernment in the foundation of it, which is an interest in gratuitous adoption, and the participation of the same spirit, the same new nature and life. Where this is not, though conviction of truth and the profession of it may for a season make an appearance of this brotherly love, it will not long continue.

**II. THE OCCASIONS OF ITS DECAY AND LOSS ARE —**

1. Differences in opinion and practice about things in religion.
2. Unsuitableness of natural tempers and inclinations.
3. Readiness to receive a sense of appearing provocations.
4. Different, and sometimes inconsistent secular interests.
5. An abuse of spiritual gifts, by pride on the one hand, or envy on the other.

6. Attempts for domination, inconsistent in a fraternity; which are all to be watched against.

### III. THE MEANS OF ITS CONTINUANCE OR PRESERVATION ARE —

1. An endeavour to grow and thrive in the principle of it, or the power of adopting grace.

2. A due sense of the weight or moment of this duty, from the especial institution and command of Christ.

3. Of the trial which is committed thereunto, of the sincerity of our grace, and the truth of our sanctification. For “by this we know that we are passed from death unto life.”

4. A due consideration of the use, yea, necessity of this duty to the glory of God, and edification of the Church; and —

5. Of that breach of union, loss of peace, disorder and confusion, which must and will ensue on the neglect of it.

6. Constant watchfulness against all those vicious habits of mind, in selflove, or love of the world, which are apt to impair it.

7. Diligent heed that it be not insensibly impaired in its vital acts; such as are patience, forbearance, readiness to forgive, unaptness to believe evil, without which no other duties of it will be long continued.

8. Fervent prayer for supplies of grace enabling us thereunto, with sundry others of a like nature. And if we judge not this duty of such importance as to be constant in the use of these means for the maintenance of it, it will not continue. (John Owen, D. D.)

**Related Resource:** See A W Pink's discussion of the hindrances to and aids or helps to the furtherance of brotherly love - [Hebrews 13:1-3 Brotherly Love](#)

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**The Pulpit Commentary** adds that the writer of Hebrews begins his charge to practice Christian virtues ...

by enjoining the **maintenance** and **manifestation** of brotherly love.

**THE MAINTENANCE OF BROTHERLY LOVE.** “Let brotherly love continue.”

#### 1. That this affection existed is implied.

That it had been exercised in former times is clear from Heb 10:32, 33, 34. That it was existent and active at the time when this Epistle was written appears from Heb 6:10.

#### 2. That this affection was imperiled is also implied.

There are several things which may check the growth and extinguish the life of brotherly love.

(1) Diversity of opinion. We are each gifted with individuality; we sometimes look at things from different standpoints; we arrive at different conclusions. This is the case in the interpretation of the sacred Scriptures, and in other matters. Differences of opinion sometimes lead to differences of feeling, to coldness and estrangement.

(2) Diversity of gifts. The great Master gives to one man five talents, to another two, and to another one. There is danger that pride in those of superior gifts, or envy in those who are less gifted, may crush this holy affection.

(3) Misunderstandings may arise amongst Christian brethren and blight their love of each other.

#### 3. That this affection should be maintained.

“Let brotherly love continue.” Let it remain. Guard against those things which endanger its existence. Cherish it. This love of the brethren is not to be limited to those who belong to the same ecclesiastical community, or to those who hold the same views of Christian doctrine; it should embrace all the disciples of the Lord Jesus. “Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in uncorruptness.” The importance of maintaining this affection is manifest from many Divine utterances (Jn 13:34, 35; 15:12, 17; 1 John 3:11, 14–18; 4:7, 8, 11, 20, 21).

#### THE MANIFESTATION OF BROTHERLY LOVE.

Two forms in which this affection should be expressed are adduced in our text.

**1. Hospitality towards strangers...**

**2. Sympathy towards sufferers.**

[\(The pulpit commentary - Homily - Personal Exhortation\)](#)

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**Brotherly love** (Homily)

**I. Especially necessary at the present season**

It was a time of trial from outside. Brothers needed to be brotherly, helping one another. We cannot expect anything from strangers, and must be ready even for their hostility. But we must do everything to guard against alienation amongst friends at a time when the closest union will be serviceable.

**II. The counsel necessary because self-regard is such a subtle sin.**

Carnal views of the kingdom of heaven, such as seem to have been prevalent among these Hebrew Christians, inevitably led to each one of them thinking what in the expected glorious state of things he would get for himself. So it was among the disciples of Jesus. They disputed who should be greatest. There was even intrigue to get a promise of the principal places. Christians need to be ever on their guard lest any feeling get dominion in their hearts hostile to the good of the whole body.

**III. We are reminded of abiding things that depend on our own disposition**

The writer has just been referring to things that can be shaken and removed, and things that cannot be shaken. These are things that God deals with by his power. But the continuance of some things depends on whether we will have them continue. Whether brotherliness shall be a deep and abiding thing depends on the state of our hearts.

**IV. Continual remembrance of the real relation of every Christian to every other Christian.**

By the same Spirit we are all born again, and therefore members of the same Divine family. Each of us, therefore, is under certain obligations; each of us may prefer certain claims. But there can be no proper treatment either of the obligations or the claims unless there be real affection underneath. It is in the spiritual sphere as in the natural; the mere relation may only irritate unless there be the feelings that properly belong to the relation.—Y. ([The pulpit commentary - Homily - Brotherly Love](#))

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**HOMILETICS Hebrews 13:1–6.—Personal exhortations.**

This book “to the Hebrews” begins like a doctrinal treatise; but it ends like a letter.

Hebrews 13 is written quite in the epistolary form; and concludes with some personal notices—the only such that are to be found in the book. The verses before us contain counsels suited to the individual Christian life. Here the apostle says in effect to his readers—

**Be not selfish (Heb 13:1, 2, 3);**

**Be not sensual (Heb 13:4);**

**Be not sordid (Heb 13:5, 6).**

**I. An exhortation to brotherly love. (Hebrews 13:1, 2, 3.)**

In the New Testament, love of the brethren means love of the spiritual brotherhood of believers. The natural affection which subsists between brothers and sisters, although very sacred and beautiful, is not in itself Christian brotherly love. No more is patriotism, or love of country, a distinctively Christian sentiment. The brotherly love which the gospel inspires forgets all differences merely of kindred and nation. It is a spiritual bond, and unites the saint to all his fellow-believers everywhere. This love is not one of the things “that can be shaken” (Heb12:27); it “never faileth” (1Cor. 13:8, 13). So, the apostle exhorts the Hebrews to make sure that it shall “remain” among themselves, and be as actively exercised in the future as in the past (Heb 6:10). For, the spirit which rejoices to recognize fellow-believers—taking pleasure in their society, laboring to promote their welfare, and throwing the veil of charity over their failings—is one of the richest and ripest fruits of the Christian life. Love of the brethren is the cement of a congregation. And only the man who cherishes it is, in the proper

meaning of the word, a gentleman. In Heb 13:2, 3, the apostle specifies two modes by which it is essential that brotherly love should be manifested; those, viz. of hospitality and sympathy. It is to be shown towards:

**1. Brethren who are strangers. (Heb 13:2.)** The Christian Hebrews were to account it a sacred duty hospitably to entertain fellow-believers from other lands or districts, who might be travelling either on business, or in the service of the Church, or because driven from home by persecution. And not only a sacred duty, but a blessed privilege. For as Abraham and Lot (Gen. 18, 19) “entertained angels unawares,” so the stranger whom the Christian receives may turn out to be a messenger from God to his soul—one whose presence may fill his house with the atmosphere of heaven. Should the stranger be a man whose mind is stored with the treasures of spiritual truth, and whose affections are devout and pure, his visit may prove a means of direct quickening to the religious life of the household. Samuel Rutherford experienced this privilege, when one Saturday evening he received a stranger into his pleasant manse at Anworth; for after being impressed at the family catechizing with the guest’s answer that the number of the commandments was eleven, the “new commandment” (John 13:34) being cited as proof, he discovered by-and-by that his visitor was Archbishop Usher, the learned and devout primate of the Church of Ireland. But another and a still sweeter thought is not remote from the motive to hospitality contained in this verse, viz. that in entertaining Christ’s servants we are receiving the Master himself: “I was a Stranger, and ye took me in” (Matt. 25:35).

**2. Brethren who are sufferers. (Heb 13:3.)** The Hebrews were to “remember” the saints who might be in prison. They were to do so “as bound with them;”—a beautiful expression, breathing the aroma of true Christian sympathy. They were to pray earnestly for them, if possible visit them, minister to their wants, and strive to secure their liberation. Brotherly kindness would lead them to conceive of themselves as occupying the position of the sufferers. It would cause them to realize the “bonds” of their brethren as an affliction personal to themselves, just as the elder Brother’s love does (Acts 9:4). But, since imprisonment is not the only calamity to which believers are exposed, the apostle proceeds to bespeak sympathy for all who in any way “are evil entreated” for Jesus’ sake. We ourselves are liable to the same adversities which our brethren endure. Let us, therefore, identify ourselves with them. It is not enough that we contribute to public charities. Neither do we discharge all our duty when we employ some person as our proxy to care for the sufferers. True Christian sympathy requires that we bring ourselves into personal contact with them. Strength is often received from the glance of a sympathizing eye, or the grasp of a loving hand, or the utterance of a tender word of holy comfort. ([The pulpit commentary](#))

## **MOTIVES TO BROTHERLY LOVE**

**William Gouge** sums up the motives that should encourage us to pursue brotherly love...

1. Brotherly love is a grace absolutely necessary. It is the foundation whereon all duties that have relation to the brethren are erected.
2. Brotherly love is one of the fairest and most glorious flowers in the Christian garden. It makes men amiable before God and man. It sends forth a sweet fragrant savor wherever it is.
3. Such is the life and vigor of brotherly love, as it puts on them in whom it is unto all duties. A stronger incitation and enforcement thereunto cannot be given.
4. So violent and irresistible is the power of love, as it will pass through all difficulties, and overthrow all obstacles. It will not be hindered from doing the good it should do.
5. Love is as salt, which infuses a savory and wholesome taste into such things as would otherwise be fresh and flashy. It is therefore joined with sundry other duties for this very purpose, even to season them. The apostle so far commends love in this kind, as he makes all things unsavory and unprofitable without it (1Co 13:1-3). He therefore gives this general advice, “Let-all your things be done in love” (1Co 16:14).
6. Love has a strong operation on others. It is a fire which heats the things that are near it. As apprehension of God’s love to us works love in us to God (1Jn 4:19), so others’ apprehension of our love to them will make them love us. And as love puts us on to all kindness unto them, so their love of us will put them on to do all kindness unto us. David and Jonathan.
7. Love is one of the most comfortable graces that a man can have. It gives evidence to others, and brings assurance to a man’s own soul of the love of God to him, of his right to Jesus Christ, of the Spirit’s abode in him, and of his right to the heavenly inheritance.

8. Love is an especial means of strengthening and establishing the kingdom of Christ. It unites the subjects and members of that kingdom in one, which is a means of great stability.

9. The nearest union that is between any in this world is between professors of the faith, and that in their mutual relation one to another, and in the joint relation that they all have to Christ. Resemblances of the nearest relation that be, are used to set this forth, as of a foundation and edifice (Ep 2:20, 21) of a vine and branches (John 15:5), of a husband and wife (Eph 5:32; 2Co 11:2), of a head and body (Eph 1:22, 23). This near union should stir us up to brotherly love; for therein we love that body which is styled Christ (1Co 12:12).

10. This world's hatred of saints should the more stir us up to love them. Christ enforces this duty upon this ground (Jn 15:17, 18, 19). The world most hates saints, and that, in this very respect, because they are saints. But brotherly love is a sovereign antidote against the poison of the world's hatred, and a precious cordial to revive and support the saint's spirits. (W. Gouge.)

Hebrews 13:2 **Do not neglect** to show **hospitality** to **strangers**, for by **this some** have **entertained angels without knowing it**. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [tes](#) philoxenias [me epilanthanesthe](#), (2PPMM) [dia tautes gar elathon](#) (3PAAL) [tines](#) xenisantes (AAPMPN) [aggelous](#).

**Amplified:** Do not forget or neglect or refuse to extend hospitality to strangers [in the brotherhood—being friendly, cordial, and gracious, sharing the comforts of your home and doing your part generously], for through it some have entertained angels without knowing it. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

**NIV:** Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.

**NLT:** Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it!

**Phillips:** nor refuse to extend your hospitality to strangers - sometimes men have entertained angels unawares. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** Let the brotherly affection continue. Of hospitality do not continue to be forgetful, for through this [namely, hospitality] some have shown hospitality to angels unawares.

**Young's Literal:** of the hospitality be not forgetful, for through this unawares certain did entertain messengers;

**DO NOT NEGLECT TO SHOW HOSPITALITY TO STRANGERS: tes philoxenias me epilanthanesthe: (2PPMM):**

- **Do not neglect:** Lev 19:34 De 10:18,19 1Ki 17:10-16 2Ki 4:8 Job 31:19,32 Isa 58:7 Mt 25:35,43 Ac 16:15 Ro 12:13 16:23 1Ti 3:2 5:10 Tit 1:8 1Pe 4:9
- [Hebrews 13 Resources](#)
- [Hebrews 13:1-3 Let Love Continue](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 13:1-4 Love, Sex, and Marriage](#) - John MacArthur
- [Hebrews 13 Love, Sex and Marriage - Study Guide - Click Drop down for individual study](#) - John MacArthur

#### Related Resources:

- [Dictionary Articles on Hospitality](#)
- [Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)

**Do not neglect to show hospitality** - The Greek reads more literally "*of the hospitality be not forgetful*". **NASB** adds "*to show*" but this is not present in the Greek. **NET** Bible is more accurate "*Do not neglect hospitality*."

Spurgeon - Abraham did so, and Lot did so; they thought they were entertaining ordinary strangers, and they washed their feet; and prepared their food but it turned out that they had entertained angels. Some people will never entertain angels unawares, for they

never entertain anybody. May we be given to hospitality, for that should be part of the character of saints.

**God** addressed **hospitality** in the Pentateuch (penta = 5 > The Torah = first five books of Bible), **Moses** recording that...

The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for (always be alert for terms of explanation - here "for" explains why Israel was to love strangers) you were aliens in the land of Egypt (surely their memory as foreigners in a strange land would serve as motivation to show hospitality to strangers): I am the LORD your God. (Lev 19:34)

He (The LORD your God) executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. **So** (term of conclusion - interrogate with the 5W/H'S) show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. (Dt 10:18, 19)

**Job** was a man who was "**blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning away from evil**" (Job 1:1) and thus it is not surprising that he gives us his example (to imitate) by practicing **hospitality** even before **hospitality** had been commanded by God (most authorities feel that Job pre-dates Moses)...

The alien (Hebrew = ger = someone who did not enjoy rights usually possessed by residents) has not lodged outside, for I have opened my doors to the traveler. (Job 31:32)

When **Jesus** returns in His glory (Mt 25:31, 32, cp Zech 14:5, Mt 24:30, 31, Mk 13:26, 27, Lk 21:27) as **King of kings and Lord of lords** (Rev 1:7-note, Rev 19:11-note, Rev 19:16-note) to sit on His throne in Jerusalem (Isa 2:2, 3, 4-note) (**Millennium** or see **Millennial Reign of Christ**), He will have a time of judgment often referred to as the "judgment of the sheep and the goats" (Judgment of the Gentiles - "nations" in Mt 25:32 = ethnos - often translated "Gentiles" = Gentiles who survive the horrible time of the **Great Tribulation**). What is fascinating is that the main criteria on which He will judge the Gentiles is whether or not they have exhibited **hospitality!** **Matthew** records the somber scene, the **King** declaring...

'For **I** was hungry, and you gave **Me** something to eat; **I** was thirsty, and you gave **Me** drink; **I** was a stranger, and you invited **Me** in; naked, and you clothed **Me**; **I** was sick, and you visited **Me**; **I** was in prison, and you came to **Me**.' "Then the righteous (not by their works which He is judging, but justified or declared righteous at a moment in time when by grace they exercised personal faith in the Messiah - Ro 3:24-note, Ro 3:28-note) will answer **Him**, saying, '**Lord**, when did we see **You** hungry, and feed **You**, or thirsty, and give **You** drink? 'And when did we see **You** a stranger, and invite **You** in, or naked, and clothe **You**? 'And when did we see **You** sick, or in prison, and come to **You**?' "And the **King** will answer and say to them, 'Truly **I** say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of **Mine**, even the least of them, you did it to **Me**.' "Then (expression of time = after He has rewarded the righteous!) He will also say to those on His left, **Depart** (present imperative) from Me (cp Mt 7:23-note, Lk 13:24, 25, 26, 27-note in both Matthew and Luke Jesus is quoting from Ps 6:8a-note), accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels (Note that hell was not originally prepared for men! cp 2Th 1:6, 7, 8, 9, 10) (Mt 25:35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41)

### **GOD OPENED HER HEART SHE OPENED HER HOUSE!**

In **Acts** after **Lydia's** heart was opened to receive the Word of Truth (**The Gospel**) implanted which was able to save her soul (Jas 1:21-note, Jas 1:18-note), one of the first responses from her **new heart and new spirit** (Ezek 36:26, Ezek 36:27 - explains "how" one can live supernaturally. Note that one of God's "ordinances" we are to obey is to show hospitality!) was to offer Paul and his companions **hospitality!**

And a certain woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened (Gk = dianoiō = means to divide, open thoroughly that which had been closed! cp another spiritual use in Lk 24:45 which we need to keep in mind every time we open the Bible praying Ps 119:18-note) of her heart (God's sovereignty) to respond (Human responsibility! Note the juxtaposition of God's sovereignty in salvation and man's responsibility = a divine mystery which should evoke not arguing [as is all too often the case] but praise and adoration to our only wise God Ro 16:27-note) to the things spoken by Paul (cp 1Co 1:18, 23, 2:2). And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, **come into my house and stay** (Gk = meno in present imperative = same verb and tense used in Heb 13:1 calling for love of the Brethren to continue or "stay")." And she prevailed upon (Gk = parabiazomai = originally meant to use force and so figuratively Lydia urged Paul and his associates strongly, constrained them by entreaties, compelled) us. (Acts 16:14, 15)

**Paul** uses the related word in his description of qualities desirable in elders (overseers) and godly widows...

An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, **hospitable (philoxenos)**, able to teach (1Ti 3:2)

For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but **hospitable (philoxenos)**, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled (Titus 1:7,8-note)

**Pastor Steven Cole Comments:** The Greek word (**philoxenos**) means, literally, "a lover of strangers." Again, this is a quality that every Christian must strive for (Ro 12:13; 1Pe 4:9), but it is especially incumbent on elders. If elders are not friendly and warm towards others, the entire church will reflect that indifference and selfishness. **Hospitality** means taking a genuine interest in others and making them feel welcomed and at ease. It should begin here when the church gathers. If you're talking with someone you know and see a visitor all alone, don't keep talking to each other. Go to the visitor and make him feel welcome! (**Ed: Are you as convicted as I am? I never thought of conversation with strangers as a way of showing "hospitality"!**) ([Read the full sermon](#))

Let a widow be put on the list only if she is not less than sixty years old, having been the wife of one man, having a reputation for good works; and if she has brought up children, if she **has shown hospitality to strangers** (All one word in Greek = **xenodocheo** from **xenos** = strangers + **dechomai** = receive favorably > "*put out the welcome mat*" for strangers!), if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work. (1Ti 5:9, 10)

**Do not neglect** (1950)(**epilanthanomai [word study]** from **epí** = in or upon - intensifies meaning of following verb + **lantháno** = lie hidden or concealed) conveys 2 basic nuances in the NT, to **forget** (not recall information concerning something) or to **neglect** (give little attention to, to omit by carelessness or design). The **epi-** preposition intensifies the meaning as noted and thus the idea is not just forgetting but "**completely forgetting.**"

**Present imperative** with a **negative** means to stop an attitude or action in progress. In other words stop (completely) forgetting to show affection to strangers because it is an "acceptable service in reverence and awe" (Heb 12:28).

**Bengel** - do not forget although you have been spoiled of your goods (eg Heb 10:34, 35). It is easy to forget such a duty... **Re:** Angels) So an unknown guest is often more worthy than he appears, and has angels for his attendants, although they are not seen. Actions are estimated according to what a man does, not merely according to what he thinks he does. Mt 25:40, 45. ([Hebrews 13 The Critical English Testament](#))

**Oxford** comments that **do not neglect** or **do not forget** conveys the idea of thoughtfulness - This very idea of thoughtfulness is repeated in the next verse where the writer says, "Remember the prisoners" (Heb 13:3). It takes no mental effort to think of those who are near and dear to us. We have no problem in exercising the spirit of consideration toward those who are our friends and colleagues, but this does not constitute the essence of thoughtfulness. The regulation here commands us to "entertain strangers" and to "remember the prisoners" (Heb 13:2, 3). The test of thoughtfulness has to do with our interest and concern for those who are strangers to us—those suffering adversity. In a world that has lost the dimension of personal involvement in the concerns of others, how refreshing to find individuals who specialize in thoughtfulness toward others. God make us sensitive to the needs of people who require encouragement and love. May our daily prayer be:

Give me a heart sympathetic and tender;  
Jesus, like Thine, Jesus, like Thine;  
Touched by the needs that are surging around me,  
And filled with compassion divine.

**Gromacki** - Most people are naturally suspicious of strangers, especially those who knock on the front door of a private residence. Many houses are guarded by high fences, strong gates, watch dogs, and security systems. The doors have multiple locks on them. Such apprehension increases in the time of political and religious persecution. The Jewish-Roman tension doubtless created the background for the second command: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers." The imperative (**Present imperative** with a **negative**) implies that the readers had stopped many acts of social benevolence. The author wanted them to resume and to maintain their hospitality. ([Stand Bold in Grace An Exposition of Hebrews](#))

**How does obey this command?** Just as one is enabled to obey all God's commands -- A personal choice of our will which is enabled and empowered by grace (Heb 12:28), which is God's supernatural power to transform naturally selfish individuals into the supernaturally empowered giving individuals who think more of others than they do of themselves! Such transformed hearts begin to reach out to others who are not necessarily in the "select group." And to motivate this supernatural behavior the writer says you might even encounter an angel See similar OT teaching in Lev 19:34, Dt 10:18,19, Job 31:19,32, Isa 58:7.

**Hospitality to strangers** (5381) (**philoxenia** - see philoxenos below) is literally love for strangers or foreigners and thus conveys the meaning of hospitality or kindness to strangers.

**TDNT** - Strangeness produces mutual tension between natives and foreigners, but hospitality overcomes the tension and makes of the alien a friend. Historically foreigners are primarily enemies or outlaws who should be killed. It is then found, however, that hospitality is a better way to deal with strangers, and they thus become the wards of law and religion.

The related word **philoxenos** (from **philos** = love, friend + **xenos**= stranger, one unknown, alien, guest) literally means "stranger loving" or a friend of strangers, showing them care and kindness. Practically **philoxenos** means fond of guests and so hospitable or given to (lover of) hospitality. It describes one who is given to a generous, welcoming and cordial reception of visitors, guests or strangers. It means to give practical help to anyone who is in need (friend or stranger, believer or unbeliever) Hospitality was a highly valued Greek and Jewish virtue. It was absolutely necessary for the expansion of the gospel and necessary for the maintenance of the fellowship within the church as well as the image of the church from without.

**Guzik** - The point is that we do this for other Christians who are strangers to us. If you invite your best friends over for lunch, that is wonderful - but it doesn't fulfill this command. A wonderful way to fulfill this command is to meet and befriend strangers at church, and to entertain them with hospitality. The ancient Greek word for hospitality (used in passages like Romans 12:13) is literally translated, "love for strangers." Brotherly love means love for all our brothers and sisters in Jesus, not just those who are currently our friends.

**Hospitable** is from Medieval Latin *hospitāre* = to receive as a guest which in turn is from Latin *hospes* = guest.

The **hospitable** man gives practical help to anyone who is in need, friend or stranger, believer or unbeliever, freely offers his time, his resources, and his encouragement to meet the needs of others.

**Jesus** spoke on hospitality, saying to "the one who had invited Him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and repayment come to you. But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous. (Lk 14:12, 13, 14)

**Comment:** Jesus warned against showing hospitality only to those who would return the favor.

In Romans **Paul** wrote that believers should be "contributing to the needs of the saints, (present tense = continually) practicing (literally "pursuing") hospitality. (Ro 12:13-note)

**Comment:** This was a necessary injunction when so many Christians were banished and persecuted. "Pursuing" indicates not only that **hospitality** is to be furnished when sought, but that Christians were (and are still) to seek opportunities of exercising it!

**Peter** links loving one another with showing hospitality - "Above all, keep fervent (**ektenes** = pictures one stretching himself out, straining intensely!) in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. *Be hospitable to one another without complaint* (**goggusmos** = murmuring, grumbling) . (1Pe 4:8, 9-note) **Amplified** translates it "Practice hospitality to one another (those of the household of faith). [Be hospitable, be a lover of strangers, with brotherly affection for the unknown guests, the foreigners, the poor, and all others who come your way who are of Christ's body.] And [in each instance] do it ungrudgingly (cordially and graciously, without complaining but as representing Him)."

**Comment:** **Be hospitable** is not an imperative (as NASB suggests), but an adjectival phrase defining the love just commanded. This "love" that stretches out and that covers is demonstrated in hospitality! Note that the Greek text has no verb (no "be" before hospitable) in verse 9. The prohibition to show no grumbling unfortunately has a sharp twang of realism about it for then, as now, guests could overstay or otherwise abuse their host's welcome. This prohibition emphasizes that the one showing hospitality needs to rely on the transforming "manifold grace of God" (1Pe 4:10-note) to carry out what could turn out to be an exasperating chore that might result in grumbling.

**Oxford** is right to remind us that "it requires no great exercise of love to show ourselves friendly to those we like, but it does call upon all the grace of God within us to go out of our way to show compassion to those who are complete strangers to us. Yet this is the essence of hospitality. Study the New Testament, observing the emphasis that the Holy Spirit puts upon Christian hospitality; then measure how far you have gone in the exercise of this holy duty. Rather disconcerting, isn't it?... In biblical times this involved washing the feet of guests, anointing their head with oil, giving them a change of clothing, and providing food and sleeping accommodations. Whether or not there was a gratuity for this or it was provided free of charge, all hospitality was judged by the measure in which these services were effectively rendered. (Institutes of Biblical preaching: Volume Seven)



**Wuest** says that **philoxenos** describes "one who is fond of offering hospitality. But the hospitality referred to here is not of the kind which says, "Come over for dinner and let us have a good time. Some day you will return the favor and I will enjoy your hospitality." The hospitality spoken of here found its occasion in the fact that in the days of the great Roman persecutions, Christians were banished and persecuted, and rendered homeless. Or, in the case of traveling preachers and teachers, ministering from church to church, these servants of God were to be received and cared for by the bishop. Or, because in the early centuries, the local churches had no church edifice in which to worship, the church met in the home of an individual. The bishop should be glad to thus open his home for this purpose."

**The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times** - In New Testament times, refusal to give hospitality amounted to rejection (Mt 10:14), and it was therefore essential for Christians to give hospitality (Gal 6:10; 1Pe 4:9). Although such a practice gave moral protection in view of the character of many inns (see p. 234) and in view of the fact that many Christians had to leave their own homes because of persecution, it was more than this: "hospitality" is **philoxenia**, a "love for others." It was particularly important for preachers of the time who had given up their livelihood so that they could preach the gospel (3Jn 1:5, 6, 7, 8). They were to be given hospitality for several days, and then encouraged to move on to another place (e.g. Acts 9:43; 16:15; Ro 16:2). One could not be recognized as a leader in the church unless one was hospitable (1Ti 3:2; Titus 1:8). (Gower, R., & Wright, F. The new manners and customs of Bible times. Chicago: Moody Press)

**Barclay** explains that "The ancient world loved and honoured hospitality. The Jews had a saying: "There are six things the fruit of which a man eats in this world and by which his horn is raised in the world to come." And the list begins: "Hospitality to the stranger and visiting the sick." The Greeks gave Zeus, as one of his favourite titles, the title Zeus Xenios, which means Zeus, the god of strangers. The wayfaring man and the stranger were under the protection of the king of the gods. Hospitality, as Moffatt says, was an article of ancient religion. Inns were filthy, ruinously expensive, and of low repute. The Greek had always a shrinking from hospitality given for money; inn-keeping seemed to him an unnatural affair. In The Frogs of Aristophanes, Dionysus asks Heracles, when they are discussing finding a lodging, if he knows where there are fewest fleas. Plato in The Laws speaks of the inn-keeper holding travellers to ransom. It is not without significance that Josephus says that Rahab, the harlot who harboured Joshua's scouts in Jericho, kept an inn. When Theophrastus wrote his character sketch of the reckless man, he said that he was fit to keep an inn or run a brothel; he put both occupations on the same level. In the ancient world there was a rather wonderful system of what were called "guest friendships." Throughout the years families, even when they had lost active touch with each other, had an arrangement that at any time needful they would make accommodation available for each other. This hospitality was even more necessary in the circle of the Christians. Slaves had no home of their own to which to go. Wandering preachers and prophets were always on the roads. On the ordinary business of life, Christians had journeys to make. Both their price and their moral atmosphere made the public inns impossible. There must in those days have been many isolated Christians fighting a lonely battle. Christianity was, and still should be, the religion of the open door. The writer to the Hebrews says that those who have given hospitality to strangers have sometimes, all unaware, entertained the angels of God. He is thinking of the time when the angel came to Abraham and Sarah to tell them of the coming of a son (Genesis 18:1 ff.) and of the day when the angel came to Manoah to tell him that he would have a son (Jdg 13:3 ff.). in the ancient world there were always many who were on the move. Inns were notoriously expensive, dirty and immoral; and it was essential that the wayfaring Christian should find an open door within the Christian community. To this day no one needs Christian fellowship more than the stranger in a strange place." Hospitality was essential in NT times because of absence of hotels or motels and the fact that the inns were notoriously evil, often in fact functioning as brothels and as places where travelers were robbed or beaten. (Barclay describes the ancient inn as) notoriously bad. In one of Aristophane's plays Heracles asks his companion where they will lodge for the night; and the answer is: "Where the fleas are fewest." Plato speaks of the innkeeper being like a pirate who holds his guests to ransom. Inns tended to be dirty and expensive and, above all, immoral. ([Hebrews 13 Commentary - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

## LONELINESS

Our high tech world leads to low touch with other people, which in turn leads to the rise in a sense of loneliness. If you are lonely then let this passage guide you to look for someone in need of help and you will alleviate the loneliness for both of you!

If you are feeling all alone,  
Reach out to someone who's bereaved;  
You both will find encouragement  
And loneliness will be relieved.  
—Sper

Many people are lonely because they build walls instead of bridges.

**Stephen Olford** - The idea of hospitality is one that finds its source in the very heart of God. Indeed, heaven is described as the Father's house with many abiding places. The purpose of God, from eternity past, has been to make the world a place of hospitality

and friendliness. The Bible has much to say about hospitality. From the earliest records we have we read of God's laws concerning hospitality to strangers and the poor (see Lev. 19:33–34; Deut. 15:7). People like Abraham, Lot, Reuel, and Manoah were given to hospitality; and Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan, who had compassion on an injured traveler, took him to a local inn, and paid for his care (see Luke 10:2-5,37). The Epistles command us to show hospitality; indeed, it is a qualification for leadership (see Ro 12:13; 1Ti 5:10; Titus 1:8; 1Pe 4:9). "Let brotherly love continue" (Heb 13:1). Hospitality that does not find its motivation from the love of God may be commercial, but it is certainly not Christian.

**Marcus Dods** - In the general decay of their faith tendencies to disown Christian fellowship had become apparent, Hebrews 10:24-25. This might also lead to a failure to recognise the wants of Christians coming from a distance, therefore hospitality is urged; not as a duty they did not already practice, but, gently, as that which they might omit through forgetfulness and as that which might bring them a message from God: "Entertainment of strangers do not neglect; for thus some have entertained angels unawares," as in Genesis 18-19; Judges 6:11-24; Judges 13:2-23 ([Hebrews 13 Commentary - The Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

**Guzik** - Hospitality is an important virtue, and often it is commanded of Christians and leaders (Romans 12:10-13; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7-8; 1 Peter 4:9). In the ancient world, "motels," where they did exist, were notorious for immorality. It was important for traveling Christians to find open homes from other Christians. This was simply a practical way to let brotherly love continue. Because of the free offer of hospitality, Christians had to watch out for people just masquerading as Christians so they could leech off the generosity of God's people. As time went on, Christian leaders taught their people how to recognize these kind of deceivers. The Didache was an early church "ministry manual," written perhaps somewhere between 90 and 110 A.D. It has this to say about how to tell if a false prophet is abusing the hospitality of those in the church: *Let every apostle that comes to you be received as the Lord. But he shall not remain except one day; but if there be need, also the next; but if he remains three days, he is a false prophet. And when the apostle goes away, let him take nothing but bread ... but if he asks for money, he is a false prophet. And every prophet that speaks in the Spirit you shall neither try nor judge; for every sin shall be forgiven, but this one sin shall not be forgiven. But not everyone that speaks in the Spirit is a prophet; but only if he holds the ways of the Lord. Therefore from their ways shall the false prophet and the true prophet be known.* (From The Ante-Nicean Fathers, Volume 7, page 380).

**FOR BY THIS SOME HAVE ENTERTAINED ANGELS WITHOUT KNOWING IT: dia tautes gar elathon (AAI) tines xenisantes (AAPMPN) aggelous:**

- **some have entertained angels:** Ge 18:2-10 19:1, 2, 3 Jdg 13:15-25 Mt 25:40
- [Hebrews 13 Resources](#)
- [Hebrews 13:1-3 Let Love Continue](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 13:1-4 Love, Sex, and Marriage](#) - John MacArthur
- [Hebrews 13 Love, Sex and Marriage - Study Guide - Click Drop down for individual study](#) - John MacArthur

**For by this** (See **term of explanation**) explains why they should not forget to show hospitality to strangers and also serves as a motivation to do so.

**Alford** - Bleek remarks that the notices found in the writings of the enemies of Christianity show how much this virtue was practised among the early believers

**Entertained** ([3579](#)) (**xenizo** from **xenos** = a stranger, foreigner) means to receive as a guest, to demonstrate hospitality and so to lodge or to entertain ("play the host" Sirach 29:25). To lodge with or be entertained by (Acts 10:6). When used intransitively, **xenizo** refers to something strange and so means to astonish (Acts 17:20) or to be surprised by the strangeness and novelty of something (1Pe 4:12, 2Macc 9:6).

**Xenizo** - 10x in 10v in **NAS** - Acts 10:6, 18, 23, 32; 17:20; 21:16; 28:7; Heb 13:2; 1Pe 4:4-note, 1Pe 4:12-note. **NAS** = entertained (2), gave... lodging (1), lodge (1), staying (3), strange things (1), surprised (2).

Once in **non-apocryphal Septuagint** - Esther 3:13.

**Angels** ([32](#)) (**aggelos**) is strictly speaking one who brings a message, a messenger. A person who makes an announcement (of a **prophet** = Hag 1:13, of a **priest** = Mal 2:7, of **John the Baptist** = Mt 11:10, Mk 1:2, Lk 7:27). **Aggelos** is a supernatural entity that attends upon or serves as a messenger of God (Mt 1:20; 2:13, 19; Lk 1:11; 2:9; Ac 5:19; 12:7, 23). In Ex 23:20 in context **aggelos** is most likely a reference to the **Angel of the LORD**.

**See related resources:**

- [Angel in Baker's Evangelical Dictionary](#)
- Torrey Topical Textbook [Angels](#)
- American Church Dictionary [Holy angels](#) [Guardian angels](#) [Angels](#)
- American Tract Society [Angel](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Angels](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Angel](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Angel](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Angels](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Angel](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Angel](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopaedia [Angels](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Guardian Angels](#) [Angels](#) [Angels \(2\)](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia - [Angel](#)
- [What are the different types of angels?](#)
- [What are the names of angels in the Bible?](#)
- [What are archangels? Is Michael the only archangel?](#)
- [Is there an angel of death?](#)

**Thayer** notes that in regard to the supernatural messenger, in both testaments **aggelos** speaks of "one of that host of heavenly spirits that, according alike to Jewish and Christian opinion, wait upon the monarch of the universe, and are sent by him to earth, now to execute his purposes (Mt. 4:6, 11; 28:2; Mk. 1:13; Lk. 16:22; 22:43 [L br. WH reject the pass.]; Acts 7:35; 12:23; Gal. 3:19, cf. Heb. 1:14), now to make them known to men (Lk 1:11, 26, 2:9; Acts 10:3; 27:23; Mt. 1:20; 2:13; 28:5; Jn. 20:12); hence the frequent expressions (angel, messenger of God).

**Aggelos** - 175x in 171v in **NAS** - angel(86), angel's(2), angelic(1), angels(80), messenger(4), messengers(3).

In the Gospels - Mt 1:20, 24; 2:13, 19; 4:6, 11; 11:10; 13:39, 41, 49; 16:27; 18:10; 22:30; 24:31, 36; 25:31, 41; 26:53; 28:2, 5; Mk 1:2, 13; 8:38; 12:25; 13:27, 32; Lk 1:11, 13, 18f, 26, 30, 34, 35, 38; 2:9, 10, 13, 15, 21; 4:10; 7:24, 27; 9:26, 52; 12:8, 9; 15:10; 16:22; 22:43; 24:23; Jn 1:51; 12:29; 20:12; Acts 5:19; 6:15; 7:30, 35, 38, 53; 8:26; 10:3, 7, 22; 11:13; 12:7, 8, 9, 15, 23; 23:8, 9; 27:23; Ro 8:38; 1Co 4:9; 6:3; 11:10; 13:1; 2Co 11:14; 12:7; Gal 1:8; 3:19; 4:14; Col 2:18; 2Th 1:7; 1Ti 3:16; 5:21; Heb 1:4, 5, 6, 7, 13; 2:2, 5, 7, 9, 16; 12:22; 13:2; Jas 2:25; 1Pe 1:12; 3:22; 2Pe 2:4, 11; Jude 1:6; Rev 1:1, 20; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 5, 7, 14; 5:2, 11; 7:1, 2, 11; 8:2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 12, 13; 9:1, 11, 13, 14, 15; 10:1, 5, 7, 8, 9; 11:15; 12:7, 9; 14:6, 8, 9, 10, 15, 17, 18, 19; 15:1, 6, 7, 8; 16:1, 5; 17:1, 7; 18:1, 21; 19:17; 20:1; 21:9, 12, 17; 22:6, 8, 16.

**Spurgeon** - Abraham did so, and Lot did so. They thought they were entertaining ordinary strangers, and they washed their feet, and prepared their food, but it turned out that they had entertained angels. Some people will never entertain angels unaware, for they never entertain anybody. May we be given to hospitality, for that should be part of the character of saints.

**Without knowing** (2990) (**lanthano**) means to escape notice (Mk 7:24, Lk 8:47, Lev 4:13; 5:3.4.15; Nm 5,13), to not know, to be unaware, to be ignorant of (Heb 13:2), to fail to remain aware of something (2Pe 3:5)

**Vine** notes that "**lanthano**, "to escape notice," is used with the aorist participle of xenizo, "to entertain," signifying "entertained... unawares" (an idiomatic usage common in classical Greek).

**NET Bible** - This is a vague allusion to people described in scripture and extra-biblical literature and may include Abraham and Sarah (Ge 18:2-15), Lot (Ge 19:1-14), Gideon (Jdg 6:11-18), Manoah (Jdg 13:3-22), and possibly Tobit (Tobit 12:1-20). ([Hebrews 13 Notes](#))

This verse brings to mind the **angels** who ate with Abraham and later with Lot (Ge 18:2; 19:1-3).

In the OT we see that not only might one entertain **angels** but one might entertain a **prophet** of God...

Now there came a day when Elisha passed over to Shunem, where there was a prominent woman, and she persuaded him to eat food. And so it was, as often as he passed by, he turned in there to eat food. (2Ki 4:8)

The early church met in homes, ministers traveled (3Jn 1:5, 6, 7, 8), persecutions drove many believers from homes (Hebrews 10:34 "accepted joyfully the seizure of your property"), they were poor and could not afford inns. Hospitality was a highly valued Greek and Jewish virtue. It was absolutely necessary for the expansion of the gospel and necessary for the maintenance of the fellowship within the church as well as the image of the church from without.

To this day no one needs Christian fellowship more than the stranger in a strange place.

A person who is hospitable gives practical help to anyone who is in need, friend or stranger, believer or unbeliever. He freely offers his time, his resources, and his encouragement to meet the needs of others. Jesus elevated hospitality in (Lk 14:12,13,14). The Lord was not, of course, saying that we are never to invite friends and relatives over for a meal. He was pointing out that the true test of godly, self-giving hospitality is not what we do for those that we like to be around or who are likely to repay us in some way, but is what we do for others solely out of sincere concern for their welfare.

We may not entertain **angels** in a literal sense (though it is possible) but any stranger could turn out to be God's **messenger** for the Greek word "angel" simply means "messenger." Indeed, most believers have had guests (eg, missionaries on furlough, Bible speakers from out of town) in our home who have turned out to be messengers of unspeakable blessings to our family.

**Illustration** - Gordon M. Ferguson tells of meeting a Filipino Methodist bishop on a European-bound ship. The bishop told of his experience when he came to North America as a student years before. The first Sunday his roommate appeared in the doorway, an umbrella under each arm. He offered to show him the way to his place of worship and then planned to go on to his own church. As they started down the street he thought, "If this man has this kind of faith and interest in my spiritual life, surely I should find out what his faith is like." He asked his friend to take him to his church and he attended it all four years. As a result he entered Drew Theological Seminary, and years later became a bishop in the Methodist church. (Sermons Illustrated)

#### **Related Resource:**

- [What does the Bible say about hospitality?](#)

## **HOSPITALITY REQUIREMENTS**

In hospitality these things are required:

1. That we do it frequently. One swallow makes not a spring. The receiving of a stranger once makes not a hospitable man. We must make a daily use and occupation of it. It was the continual practice of Lot and Abraham, as may appear by their behaviour.
2. It must be willingly. We must not tarry till strangers offer themselves.

We must pull them in, as Abraham and Lot did. We must constrain them, as Lydia did St. Paul and Silas.

3. Cheerfully without grudging (1Peter 4:9), we must not repine at it, speak hardly of them when they be gone.
4. Meekly; not receive them after a stately and lord-like manner; but after a meek manner, as if we were rather beholden to them, than they to us. They be the brethren of Christ, the sons of God; we are not worthy of such guests.
5. Abundantly; according to that ability wherewith God hath blessed us. If we have but a little, let them have a little, as the widow of Sarepta dealt with Elias. If we have a great portion of God's blessings, let them taste of them.

6. We must do it perseveringly: be not weary of well doing. Hospitality is a good thing, be not weary of it. Let thy house be open to good men all the days of thy life. But alas, this is a hard doctrine, who can abide it; we are too much wedded to the world: yea, they that make a great show of Christianity, are ready to say with Nabal, "Shall I take my bread and my water, and my flesh, and give it unto men whom I know not whence they be?" "Oh forget not this duty. Here he means such strangers especially as are compelled to forsake their country for the gospel's sake; but it is to be extended to all.

It is an excellent duty, and we have many spurs to prick us to it.

1. God requires it (Isaiah 58:7).
2. We have many examples for it.
3. We ourselves may be strangers, therefore do as ye would be done to.
4. The want of it hath been grievously punished, it was the overthrow of the whole tribe (Jdg 20.).
5. In receiving men that are strangers, we may receive angels. Preachers which be God's angels, nay, Christ Himself (Matthew 25:6).
6. It is gainful for this life, and that which is to come. (W. Jones, D. D.)

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**A genius for kindness:** — “There is a man,” said his neighbor, speaking of a village carpenter, “who has done more good, I really believe, in this community than any other person who ever lived in it. He cannot talk very well in prayer-meetings, and he doesn’t very often try. He isn’t worth two thousand dollars, and it’s very little that he can put down on subscription papers for any good object. But a new family never moves into the village that he does not find them out, to give them a neighborly welcome and offer any little service he can render. He is usually on the lookout to give strangers a seat in his pew at church. He is always ready to watch with a sick neighbor, and look after his affairs for him; and I’ve sometimes thought he and his wife keep house plants in winter just for the sake of being able to send little bouquets to invalids. He finds time for a pleasant word for every child he meets, and you’ll always see them climbing into his one-horse wagon when he has no other load. He really seems to have a genius for helping folks in all sorts of common ways, and it does me good every day just to meet him on the streets.” (Baxendale’s Anecdotes.)

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**SPARE BEDS** - In 2004, Casey Fenton co-founded a nonprofit service that helps travelers find a “friendlier alternative” to unfriendly hotels. They find homeowners who are willing to offer their spare beds and couches to others.

The group boasts almost a quarter of a million friendships that have been formed from their service. “The more we network,” said Fenton, “the better chance we have of this world being a better place.”

That service sounds a lot like biblical hospitality. In the final pages of his letter to the Hebrews, the writer instructed believers to practice their faith in Jesus Christ through hospitality (Heb 13:2). That was defined by the early Christ-followers as acts of generosity toward strangers.

In the first century, hospitality often included housing a guest. This was hardest to do during a time of persecution. These believers would not know whether the person was a spy or a fellow believer being pursued. But by entertaining strangers, the writer said, they could indeed be inviting a blessing into their homes.

As God’s people, we are called to be hospitable to others as part of our gratitude for the salvation we have received from God.— by Marvin Williams ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, grant me a loving heart,  
A will to give and share,  
A whispered prayer upon my lips  
To show I really care.  
—Brandt

**People with a heart for God have a heart for people.**

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**THE KINDNESS OF STRANGERS** - While I was taking a flight to Surabaya, Indonesia, for a Bible conference, the flight attendants brought meal service. I had just eaten in the Singapore airport, so I declined, asking only for a soft drink. The Indonesian man next to me, a stranger, was visibly concerned.

The man asked if I felt okay, and I assured him I was fine. He then asked if perhaps the meal didn’t appeal to me. I responded that I just wasn’t hungry. He then surprised me by offering his own meal to me, thinking that if I tried it I might actually enjoy it. It was done in such a gentle and genuine way that it was obviously an expression of his concern for my welfare.

In a self-centered world where we are conditioned to look out for our own interests above and beyond all else, such kindness was unexpected. The man’s simple gesture showed a different kind of heart and a different set of values. As followers of Christ, we are called to model a similar counter-cultural attitude toward life (Phil. 2:1-8).

In Hebrews 13:2 we read, “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.” What better way to represent Christ than with kindness—even to strangers. — by Bill Crowder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Try to bring God’s love and kindness  
Into someone’s life today;

Even just the gift of caring  
Will the Savior's love display.  
—Hess

**Kindness is one gift anyone can give.**

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**THE HOSPITALITY MANGER** - Victoria's family refers to her as the "hospitality manager" of their home. She lives in Singapore with her daughter and son-in-law. He is the RBC Ministries international director, and they often have visitors. Victoria stays busy as a volunteer in the RBC office on that island nation, but her primary ministry is the gift of caring and hospitality. She makes their visitors feel welcome, loved, and cared for in their home.

The word hospitality means "love of strangers," and this is precisely what the apostle Paul was calling us to in Romans 12. In the midst of the practical challenges to believers about our relationship with God and one another, Paul said that we are to be "distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality" (v.13). This may call us outside our comfort zone to show love and care to those the Lord brings across our path. Hebrews 13:2 adds this intriguing thought about hospitality: "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels."

Often overlooked and sometimes unappreciated, the ministry of the "hospitality manager" is a great gift, and it brings with it the added possibility of surprising blessings along the way! — by Bill Crowder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

My heart is filled, dear Lord, with love,  
So let it show in words and deeds;  
And help me share, in all my ways,  
The overflow for others' needs.  
—Hess

**To stretch your soul, reach out with Jesus' love.**

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**GOD'S LOVE ON A PLATE** - During His life on earth, Jesus chose to identify with poor and destitute people. He lived as one who had no place to call home (Mt. 8:20), and His ministry was marked by compassion for the needy.

In her book Hidden Art, Edith Schaeffer of L'Abri Fellowship tells of feeding the occasional vagrant who would stop at her back door and ask, "May I have a cup of coffee, ma'am, and maybe some bread?"

Edith would invite him to sit down, then go in to prepare a tray of food fit for a king: steaming soup and thick sandwiches, cut and arranged artfully on a plate with garnishes. The children would make a tiny bouquet, and if it was dusk, add a candle.

In amazement the man would gasp, "For me?" "Yes," Edith would answer, "and coffee will be ready in a minute. This Gospel of John is for you too. Take it with you. It really is very important."

In my kitchen hangs this saying: "Food is God's love made edible." Certainly those vagrants at Edith's door experienced God's love through her and her family.

How about serving up God's love to someone? Through your generosity you will be serving Christ—and perhaps, you may be serving an angel in disguise (Heb. 13:2). - Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Love is giving for the world's needs,  
Love is sharing as the Spirit leads,  
Love is caring when the world cries,  
Love is compassion with Christlike eyes.  
—Brandt

**Food is God's love made edible.**

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**THE BEST ROOM** - During a January research trip to Germany, I was dismayed to learn that we would be staying at a monastery. I pictured an austere place with no heat, cold stone floors, and hard beds. Instead, I found a warm, welcoming, comfortable room. My colleague said, "The monks believe in treating their guests as they would treat Christ." Though they don't live in such comfort themselves, they are content.

Robert Herrick, a 17th-century English poet, wrote:

Christ, He requires still, wheresoe'er He comes,  
To feed, or lodge, to have the best of rooms:  
Give Him the choice; grant Him the nobler part  
Of all the house: the best of all's the heart.

It may seem easier to welcome Christ into our heart than to open our life to others. Whether it's a room in our home or time in our schedule, too often we treat people as intruders rather than guests.

The apostle Peter wrote: "Above all things have fervent love for one another, for 'love will cover a multitude of sins.' Be hospitable to one another without grumbling" (1 Peter 4:8-9).

We honor Christ by giving Him the best room, our hearts, and by offering willing hospitality to others. — by David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread](#). Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

I am Yours, Lord, yet teach me all it means,  
All it involves of love and loyalty,  
Holy service, full and glad surrender,  
And unreserved obedience unto Thee!  
—Bennett

**To know love, open your heart to Jesus.  
To show love, open your heart to others.**

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**WHO'S ON MY GUEST LIST?** - I love hosting festive dinners. Sometimes I'll say: "Tonia, we haven't had anyone over for dinner in a while. Who do you think we should invite?" We go through our proposed guest list and suggest friends we have never invited or have not invited in a while. And it seems like this list is normally comprised of people who look and sound and live like we do, and who can reciprocate. But if we were to ask Jesus whom we should have over for dinner, He would give us a totally different guest list.

One day a prominent Pharisee invited Jesus into his home, probably for table fellowship, but possibly to watch Him closely so he could trap Him. While there, Jesus healed a man and taught the host a significant lesson: When making out your guest list for a dinner party, you should not be exclusive—inviting friends, relatives, rich neighbors, and those who can pay you back. Instead, you should be inclusive—inviting the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. Although such people would not be able to pay the host back, Jesus assured him that he would be blessed and that God would reward him (Luke 14:12-14).

Just as Jesus loves the less fortunate, He invites us to love them by opening up our hearts and homes. — by Marvin Williams ([Our Daily Bread](#). Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

The poor and needy everywhere  
Are objects of God's love and care,  
But they will always know despair  
Unless His love with them we share.  
—D. De Haan

**Opening our hearts and homes  
blesses both us and others.**